

Dr. Jayne's Granite Building
242-244 Chestnut Street
Philadelphia 6, Pa.

HABS No. PA-188

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
Reduced Copies of Measured Drawings

Historic American Buildings Survey

National Park Service
Eastern Office Design and Construction
120 S. Third St., Phila., Pa.

DR. JAYNE'S GRANITE BUILDING

owner - demolished - last owner U.S. Government, part of
Independence National Historical Park Project

Date of Erection - 1849-1850, wings 1851, interior rebuilt
after fire of 1872
ref. Philadelphia Public Ledger, May 16, 1850, Sept. 6, 1850
Sept. 11, 1851, p 1, c 3
The Pennsylvanian, Feb. 16, 1850, Dec. 13, 1850

Date of viewing - October 7-15, 1957

Description -

Exterior

Facade (north)

8 stories, 7 bays, flat roof, granite facing.
1st floor: 5 bays of unequal width; on each side,
2 wide openings, next 2 slightly wider openings;
central bay the narrowest. Each bay is separated by
a monolithic granite pier with wide ones on each
side and 4 narrower ones in the center.

The piers have unusual caps which look like curved tri-
glyphs with 4 channels and 2 half channels on the
outside piers and 2 channels and 2 half channels on
the inside piers.

The cornice above the first floor has curved modillions
and ornate corbels at the ends.

Floors 2 through 7 contain rectangular windows
separated from each other by Gothic columns of
3 circular sections, with belt molding marking each
story.

Each window has a cast iron grating with a gothic
design of trefoil arcading surmounted by trefoils.

The 2nd floor had sash windows, probably a later
addition.

The windows on floors 3 through 6 had casement openings
with a rectangular light above divided into two sections.
Each casement had three panes or lights.

7th floor had windows framed by a Gothic arch.
Fixed glass was in the arch below which was a
rectangular casement window.

8th floor had circular quartrefoil windows.

The top cornice had ornate modillions at the ends
and a complex course of moldings.

In the middle of the entablature was carved the name of
the original owner JAYNE.

Originally, there was a Gothic turret at either end
which contained "machinery for hoisting goods to the
different floors." ref. Public Ledger, Sept. 6, 1850

Description, Exterior, facade cont'd.

Also , originally, there was a two story wood tower, octagonal with a castellated top.

Side Buildings erected 1851, west addition
demolished by Oct. 1957

East Wing - 6 stories, 8 bays with three doors,
2 with Gothic panneling and one with original
hardware.

Granite front. Piers on ground floor with
moldings on base and square capitals with
chamfered corners.

The modillions are unusual with a square
block abacus and cut away with a circular
curve below.

The 2nd floor had rectangular openings and sash
windows.

The window openings of the 3rd through 6th
floors had flat pointed arches.

There were string courses with modillions below
marking each floor.

The top cornice was composed of large
modillions and dentils.

East and West walls were party walls and hence not seen.

Back Elevation (south)

8 stories, 7 bays, 1st floor with four
openings. The monolithic piers and lintels
were of immense size which necessitated
a special hoist when they were put in place.
Granite was used for two stories , the other
stories were of brick. The casement windows
had ten panes.

Dimensions - Height 129 ft including tower
98 ft. for 8 stories
main building 42 ft frontage and 137 depth.

ARCHITECT - William J. Johnston, 1811-1849.

Philadelphia architect who died at the age of
38 after a trip abroad for his health. He
designed the Jayne Building in 1849 and only
the basement was begun before his death. The
building was completed under the superintendence
of Thomas U. Walter, architect of Girard
College and the Dome of the Capitol in Washington.
Johnston also designed the Mercantile Library,

and the Bank of Commerce on Chestnut Street.

History - The building was used by Dr. Jayne until his death in 1866. It was considered one of the handsomest buildings in Philadelphia. It was the highest in the city when it was built, being 129 feet high including the tower. There was a fire in the building in 1872 and the tower was destroyed. It was never rebuilt. The interior floors were replaced in the same manner that they had been before, that is supported on cast iron columns of which 144 were used in the structure. They diminished in height and diameter from the ground floor up to the top floor. After the fire more plaster was put on the floors and ceilings in the hope of making the building more fireproof.

This building was recognized by Charles E. Peterson, Historical Architect, National Park Service to be the prototype of the skyscraper design which was later made famous by Louis Sullivan in Chicago and St. Louis in the 1880's. Sullivan had been in Philadelphia at the beginning of his career when he was working in the office of Frank Furness, so Sullivan had ample opportunity to study and admire the genius of the design of the 38 year old William Johnston.

The Jayne Building was probably the most distinguished and influential building designed in this country in 1849. Its demolition in 1957 was a misfortune.

REFERENCES

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